

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 SP-02 COME-00 EB-08
LAB-04 SIL-01 IO-13 PM-05 NSC-05 SS-15 L-03 HA-05
/099 W

-----024597 151647Z /53

P R 151440Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 233
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD POUCH
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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STATE FOR NEA/RA AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PLAB, KU
SUBJ: KUWAIT ICATU MEETING - BICKERING PREVAILS

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REF: (A) KUWAIT 0905 (NOTAL), (B) CAIRO 4932 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: KUWAIT ICATU/CONFERENCE HAS TURNED INTO A CIRCUS.
EGYPTIANS HAVE WALKED OUT OF CONFERENCE AND WILL LEAVE KUWAIT
FEB. 15. IRAQI NOMINEE FOR ICATU SECRETARY GENERALSHIP (AL-
MAWLA) REPORTEDLY HAS BOYCOTTED MEETINGS BECAUSE OF CRITICISM
BY SYRIAN DELGATE. JORDANIANS AND KUWAITIS REPORTEDLY

SUPPORT SYRIAN. MEETING TO "EXPEL" OR "SUSPEND" EGYPT
FROM ICATU WAS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD AFTERNOON OF FEB. 15,
BUT AT LEAST ONE DELEGATION BESIDES EGYPTIANS PLANS TO
LEAVE BEFORE THIS MEETING, CALLING WHOLE SESSION WORTHLESS.
MOST DELEGATIONS REPORTEDLY ARE "AGAINST THE IRAQIS". END
SUMMARY.

2. KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF ARAB TRADE UNIONS
(ICATU) MEETING, ALREADY IN DISARRAY FOLLOWING
EGYPTIAN WALKOUT ON FIRST DAY (FEB. 13), NOW APPEARS TO HAVE
TURNED INTO SOMEWHAT
OF A CIRCUS. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS REPORTS, KUWAITI
HOSTS ARE MAKING "INTENSIVE EFFORTS TO PREVENT THE...CON-
FERENCE FROM SPLITTING UP BEFORE IT HAD EVEN STARTED".
REPORTEDLY "INFIGHTING PREVAILED" AMONG THE DELEGATES OF
18 ARAB COUNTRIES TO THE CONFERENCE, WITH OBJECTIONS BEING
RAISED ABOUT EACH OTHER'S ATTITUDES AND STATEMENTS. ACTING
SEC. GEN. ALI AL-MAWLA, AN IRAQI, REPORTEDLY STAYED AWAY
FROM THE MEETING ON FEB. 14 IN PROTEST OVER A STATEMENT
BY CHIEF SYRIAN DELEGATE FATHI HIDID, REBUKING AL-MAWLA
FOR NOT CALLING FOR SUPPORT OF THE "FIVE REJECTIONIST
COUNTRIES" (APPARENTLY INCLUDES "PALESTINE") IN HIS FEB. 13
OPENING SPEECH. KUWAITI AND IRAQI DELEGATES REPORTEDLY
GOT INTO AN ARGUMENT OVER THIS POINT, WITH THE KUWAITIS
SIDING WITH THE SYRIANS. JORDAN REPORTEDLY ALSO VOICED
SUPPORT FOR THE SYRIAN DELEGATE.
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3. KUWAIT LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF INTERNATIONAL
LABOR MATTERS CONFIRMED TO EMBOFF MORNING FEB. 15 THAT
EGYPTIAN DELEGATION HAD WALKED OUT OF ICATU MEETING IN
PROTEST OVER ATTACK BY KUWAITI CHAIRMAN OF CONFERENCE, AL-
FARRAJ. QUERIED ABOUT THE WITHDRAWAL, AL-FARRAJ
REPORTEDLY SAID HE HAD RECEIVED NO NOTICE OF WHAT THE
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EGYPTIANS PLANNED TO DO. KUWAIT LABOR MINISTRY SOURCE
HOWEVER SAID THAT EGYPTIANS PLAN TO LEAVE KUWAIT SOMETIME
FEB. 15. HE ADDED THAT SPECIAL ICATU CONFERENCE COMMITTEE
IS SUPPOSED TO MEET LATE AFTERNOON FEB. 15 TO CONSIDER
"EXPLUSION" OR "SUSPENSION" OF EGYPT FROM ICATU.

4. ALTHOUGH PRESS REPORTS DID NOT CITE LEBANON AS PARTI-
CIPATING IN ICATU MEET, DELEGATE TO CONFERENCE FROM LEBANESE
UNIONS (HASSEEB ABDUL-JAWAD, A PALESTINIAN FROM SIDON) TOLD
MEMBER OF EMBASSY STAFF THAT MOST DELEGATIONS WERE "AGAINST
THE IRAQIS". DISGUSTED BY "CONFUSION AND LACK OF PROGRESS
IN TALKS", LEBANESE DELEGATE SAID HE PLANNED TO LEAVE
KUWAIT AFTERNOON OF FEB. 15 EVEN THOUGH ICATU MEETINGS
SCHEDULED TO CONTINUE THROUGH FEB. 16.

5. BESIDES ELECTING AL-FARRAJ CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN, MEETING
NAMED HAMID JALLUD OF LIBYAN DELEGATIONAS CONFERENCE
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN. AL-FARRAJ NOTED TUNISIAN DELEGATION UNABLE
TO ATTEND BECAUSE ITS HEAD, HABIB ASHOUR, IS IN A TUNISIAN
JAIL.

6. CONFEREES SUPPOSEDLY AGREED ON AGENDA INCLUDING DISCUSSION OF "THE RECENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE ARAB WORLD," SOME CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS (UNSPECIFIED), VENUE OF ICATU HEADQUARTERS, AND ELECTING A SECRETARY GENERAL AND A CHAIRMAN OF ICATU.

7. COMMENT: WHAT HAD LOOKED LIKE AN OCCASION FOR RHETORICAL TUB-THUMPING BY RADICALS AND REJECTIONISTS SEEMS TO HAVE DEGENERATED INTO SHOUTING MATCHOVER WHOSE REJECTIONIST CREDENTIALS ARE MORE IMPECCABLE. KUWAIT IS PROBABLY EMBARRASSED TO BE HOSTING SUCH A PERFORMANCE BUT UNABLE TO EXERT MUCH CONTROL. GOK, ACCORDING TO MFA UNDERSEC AL-RASHID, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAD CONSIDERED ICATU MEETING AS RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT. HE TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT, HAD EGYPT REQUESTED DELAY EARLIER (REF A) AND BEEN SUPPORTED BY A FEW OTHERS, GOK WOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY TO POSTPONE MEETING. LABOR MINISTER SHAIKH SALEM SABAH HAD ADVISED KUWAIT DELEGATION TO BEHAVE MODERATELY, BUT GOK NEVERTHELESS WAS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT AL-FARRAJ'S ATTACK ON EGYPTIAN POLICY BECAUSE OF MEETING'S INSIGNIFICANCE. CONSEQUENTLY, WHILE SUFFERING SOME EMBARRASSMENT, GOK MAY FEEL THIS IS GOOD ADVERTISE-
MENT FOR "FREE EXPRESSION" IN KUWAIT.
MAESTRONE

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